

BOGDAN SOULTOV

ANCIENT POTTERY CENTRES IN MOESIA INFERIOR



SOFIA PRESS

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Three big pottery centres were brought to light in the last few years in North Bulgaria: the first in Boutovo¹, the second near Pavlikeni², and the third near Hotnitsa³. Appearing in the first few decades of the 2nd century, they existed until the second half of the 4th century. They are the only ancient pottery centres to have been discovered in Bulgaria and on the Balkan Peninsula so far⁴.

The appearance in ancient times of the pottery centres in Boutovo and near Pavlikeni and Hotnitsa was the result of a complex process which would have been incomprehensible to us had we no detailed knowledge about the period and the people who lived then.

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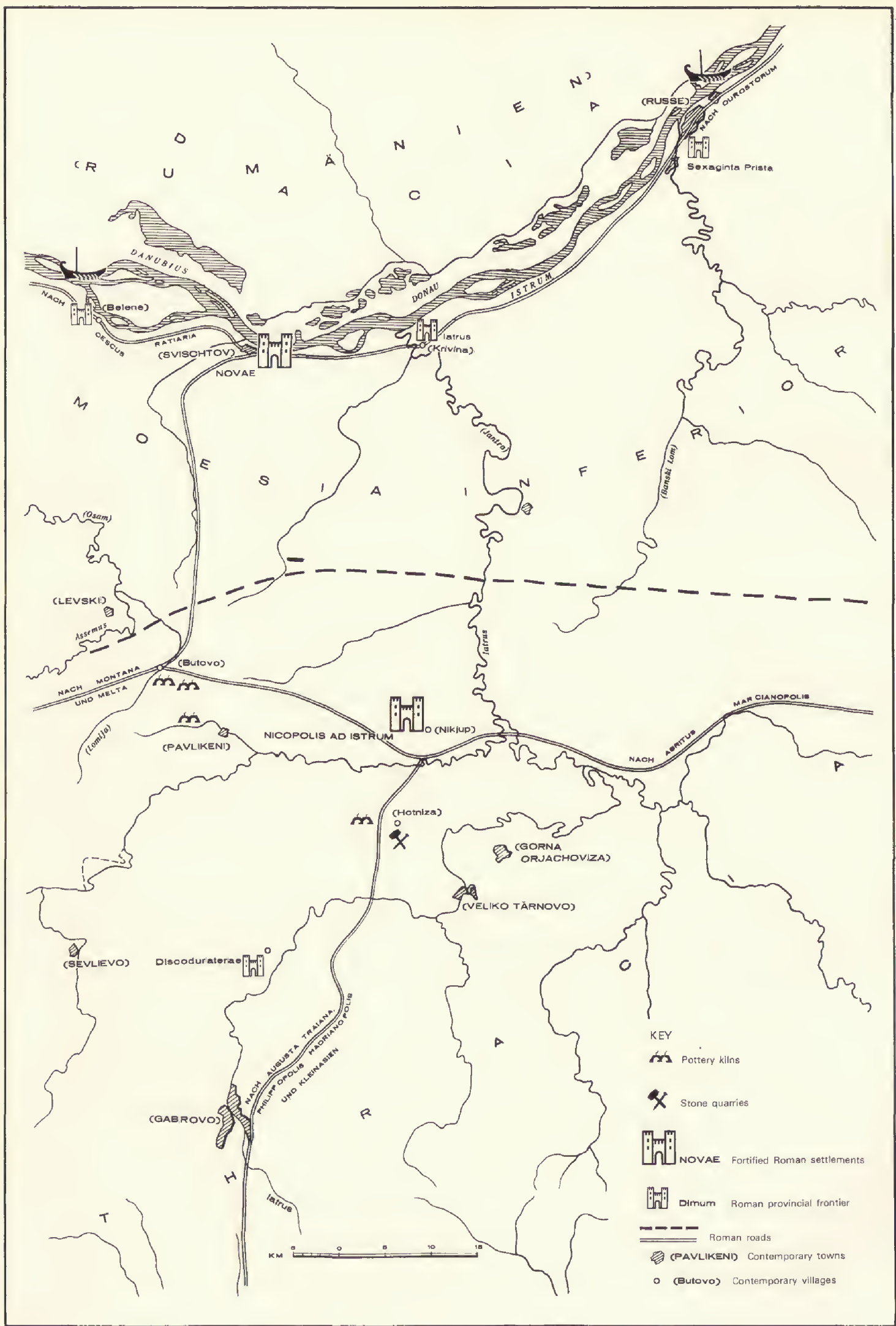
The Thracians were the earliest known inhabitants of the present-day Bulgarian lands. They have left abundant traces of their habitation in valuable and unique objects of art and culture which attest the high level of their civilization.

The Thracian tribes were forced to engage in continual warfare in their struggle against the inroads of foreign invaders. One of the longest and most cruel of the wars they waged was with the Romans, a war which lasted a century and a half and which ended in the complete subjugation of the fertile land of the Thracians.

In the year 15 A.D. the Roman province of Moesia was founded to the north of the Balkan Range and about three decades later the province of Thrace was formed to the south of it. Later on Moesia was divided into two provinces: Moesia Inferior and Moesia Superior.

The vast majority of the population in the occupied territories were subjected to ruthless exploitation by the Roman authorities. The Romans' control was still only tenuous as they could rely only on their armed forces and the support of a privileged and rich minority of colonizers and local aristocracy.

The colonizers in the newly formed provinces were faced first of all with two tasks: the fortification of the Danubian frontier and urban development with the building of new cities. These new cities were settled with war veterans, civilians of Roman, Thracian and other origin, craftsmen from Asia Minor and Egyptian merchants.



Large camps were established for the legions on the bank of the Danube and in the neighbourhood of these camps there sprang up settlements which developed into cities – Ratiaria near the present village of Archar, Oescus near Ghighen, Novae near Svishtov and Durostorum near Silistra.

Prior to the Roman invasion, the Thracians inhabited the area between the Danube and the Balkan Range. They usually settled in the fertile river valleys or around springs where they built small villages.

The Roman authorities encouraged the building of cities in this part of the present-day Bulgarian lands. Here, through the harsh exploitation of the ordinary masses formed of natives and new settlers, conditions were created for the emergence of a well-to-do class of slave-owners, who kept a firm hold of trade, industry, money-lending and the vast stretches of land lying round the cities.

The principal city in the central region between the Danube and the Balkan Range from the second through the fourth century was Nicopolis ad Istrum – the city of victory on the Danube. The ruins of this city lie about 20 kilometres to the north of Veliko Turnovo and three kilometres to the south of the village of Nikyup.

Nicopolis ad Istrum was founded in 102 by the Emperor Trajan, in honour of his victory over the Dacians who had settled in the lands north of the Danube. Thick fortified walls surrounded the city and within the walls were fine public and private buildings of white stone: the theatre, the city council, the baths, etc. Temples to Roman, Greek and other deities added to the general magnificence of the city – temples which were erected through the merciless exploitation of slave labour.

The stone building material was brought from the big quarries near the village of Hotnitsa, where in those days there was a large village of slave stonecutters.

Nicopolis ad Istrum was the centre of a vast stretch of territory which covered more or less the same region as does the present-day Veliko Turnovo district.

At the end of the Dacian Wars in the early years of the second century and after the formation of the new Roman province of Dacia, the lands between the Danube and the Balkan Range ceased to be a frontier zone where the peace was frequently disturbed by the incursions of northern tribes. For over 130 years this area, which included Nicopolis ad Istrum and its territory, enjoyed a life with few serious disturbances from without and reached the peak of its economic and cultural development towards the middle of the third century. Nicopolis ad Istrum flourished as a large economic, trading and cultural centre. It maintained a brisk trade with foreign lands, especially with the Eastern Roman provinces from where

it imported textiles, olive oil, dyes, fruit, cosmetics and other things. Among the goods that appeared on the market, there was a great variety of pottery of the red-glazed ('Arretine Ware') type which was so wide-spread in the Roman epoch. It was manufactured first in Italy and Asia Minor where the large centres of pottery production in Arezzo, Pozzuoli, Pergamum and the Island of Rhodes sprang up in the first century B. C. Later the art of making pottery spread throughout the huge Roman Empire.

Although there were convenient waterways and roads and, for that time, advanced means of transport, it cost a great deal to bring goods from distant places and made them too expensive for the majority of the people whose purchasing capacity was extremely low. That is why the idea spread among the potters who were both artisan producers and tradesmen that it would be better to move their workshops than to continually transport their pottery. This came about not only through this idea of the potters. It was the result of the complicated socio-economic situation in the Roman Empire – the gradual decentralization of industry and the gaining of economic independence by the different provinces, where goods made locally began to replace imported ones. Thus ceramic ware began to be made in the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum by potters from Asia Minor who settled there and by local people who mastered this craft.

At first the new artisan settlers chose to live and work in the newly founded cities and the larger villages where they could rely on a stable market. Thus a few decades after the foundation of Nicopolis ad Istrum, a comparatively small pottery was working not far from its quarries, in the vicinity of the present-day village of Hotnitsa. Its output was sold to the stone-cutters who lived in the neighbouring villages.

During the early part of the second century another pottery centre was set up five kilometres to the west of the town of Pavlikeni. In actual fact, there had been quite large Thracian settlements in this region long before the Romans set foot there.

Very soon this fine pottery became a part of the everyday life of the native Thracian people, who naturally boosted its output. New and suitable places were sought for the opening of more workshops. The rich clay deposits near the present-day village of Boutovo attracted the attention of the potters. Here, too, there had been a large Thracian settlement before the Romans came and this later on developed into an important industrial centre which lay on the border-line between the Roman provinces of Thrace and Moesia Inferior and at an important junction where the route from Nicopolis ad Istrum to Melita (near the present-day town of Lovech) crossed that from Novae on the Danube to Augusta Trajana (the present-



day town of Stara Zagora), running from there over the Balkan Range to Asia Minor.

Fifty ancient kilns and potter's workshops have been brought to light in the surroundings of Hotnitsa, Pavlikeni and Boutovo. A large amount of finished ware and potter's tools have also been unearthed. The finds have made it possible to form an idea of how the pottery was made and of how the work in the potters' workshops was organized.

Only one potter's workshop has been discovered near Hotnitsa. It has three rooms in a row – in the first two the clay was wedged and dried and the finished articles were baked, and in the third the potters lived.



The first potter's workshops near Pavlikeni were small but later on, as a result of the growing production, new and larger ones were built.

In Boutovo the sites of former potter's workshops have also been unearthed. They are situated along the right bank of the River Lomiya and must have formed a whole potter's quarter in Boutovo.

The workshops in Hotnitsa, Pavlikeni and Boutovo were covered with large curved tiles and were ventilated.

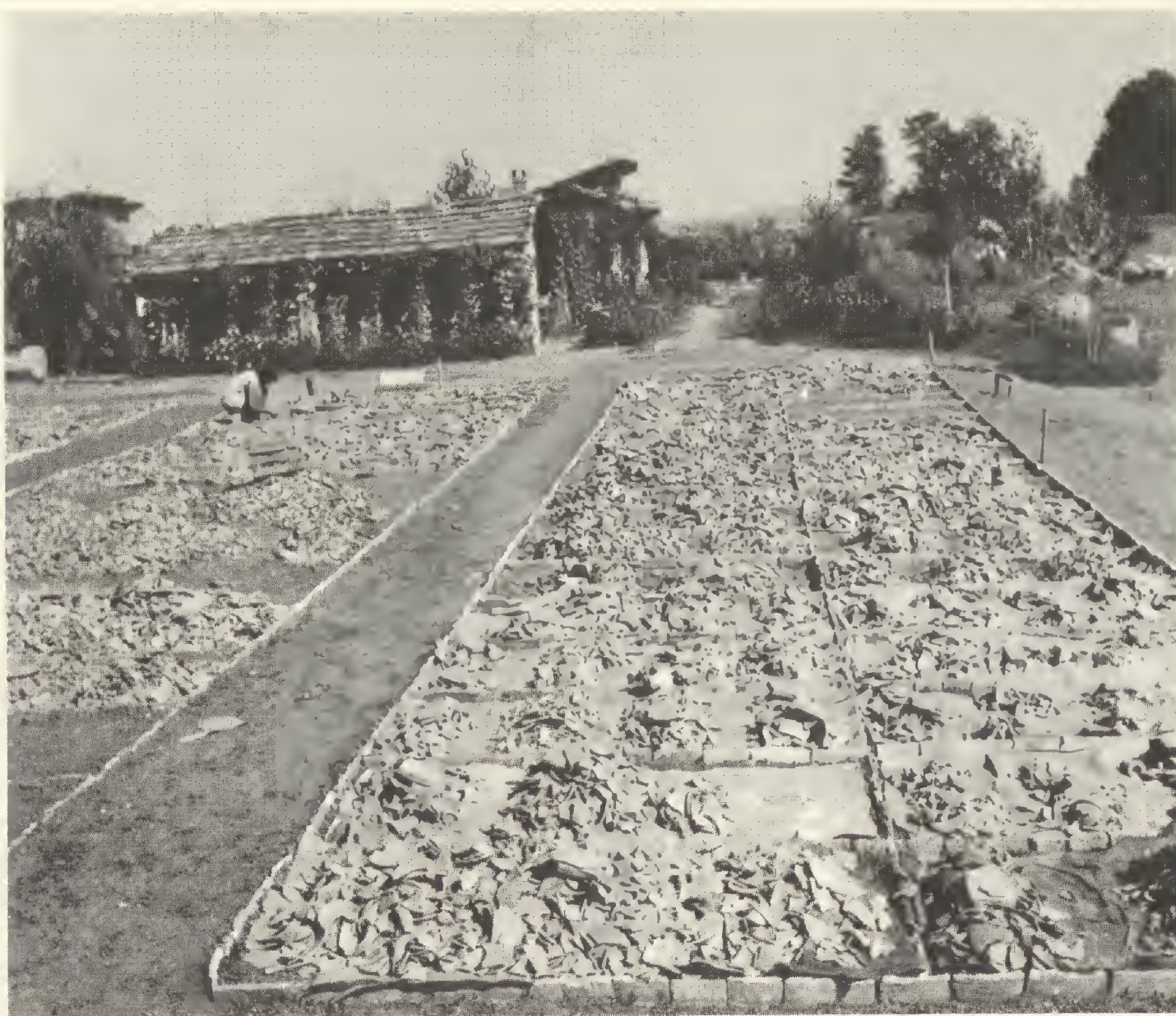
The making of pottery is a long and complex technological process, beginning with the digging out of the clay and ending with the baking of the ware. The old masters of Hotnitsa, Pavlikeni and Boutovo worked with local clay which had good properties for the making of pottery. They usually dug it out in autumn



in order to let it stand and freeze in the winter. After this the clay was wedged and then moulded straight away to make household pottery or to be used for building purposes. In order to make finer luxury ware, the clay was mixed with water and the mixture was left to stand for some time in mixing troughs.

When the vessels, ornaments, etc., were moulded into shape they were left to dry on wooden shelves arranged in large sheds. Today nothing is left of these shelves except the iron studs that fastened them into position.

The final and most difficult stage was the firing of the pottery in the kiln.



Here it was a question of the potter's experience and skill whether an exquisitely shaped vase or small figurine or a richly ornamented tray would survive the firing to become somebody's valued possession or would be turned into a shapeless vitreous mass.

The structure of all the ancient kilns in Hotnitsa, Pavlikeni and Boutovo rested on one and the same principle. They were half or entirely dug into the earth and had two chambers, one above the other. The warm air came from the hearth through a covered flue into the lower chamber and then passed through the small round openings of an earthen grate into the upper chamber in which the unfired pottery was placed. There were round, elliptical and rectangular kilns. The grates of the first two were supported by one or two pillars while in the rectangular type they lay on an intricate arched structure. It was usual for several kilns to be arranged in a circle with a common working ground. Such an arrangement made it easy to work the kilns. The fine ware was baked in the small kilns and the coarser everyday pottery in the large ones. Usually the kilns were built under wooden sheds, next door to the shops, but some of them were inside the workshops.



Usually the work was done by slaves, bent toiling over the potter's wheel or sweating by the blazing fire in the kiln.

The excellent moulding properties of the local clay enabled the ancient potters to shape it into a wide variety of forms. The composition of the exceedingly thin layer of light brown slip which gave the pottery a metallic lustre has not yet been fully explained⁵.

A considerable part of the pottery was made on the potter's wheel. The vessels are thin-walled, tinkle when tapped and well baked. Large flat dishes, plates, deep bowls, trim double-handled pots, cone-shaped cups, water-flasks and amphorae occur the most frequently in the finds that have been unearthed.

Sometimes the vessels were decorated while on the potter's wheel. The ancient potters had various modes of artistic execution in decorating them and used various tools. The combs made out of bones, which we found in our digs, served to incise parallel lines and the small bronze and iron chisels obviously produced the rows of tiny holes, forming intricate geometrical patterns. The cogwheel was used



very often to make short vertical-line patterns on the inner side of the flat dishes and the outer horizontal rim of the bowls.

There was a wide-spread practice to stamp the pots with the names of potters, usually on the under side. Initially the stamp did not pursue any decorative purpose but was used to provide information about the name of the master who owned the workshop. But quite often, the die, instead of being engraved with the name of the potter, was engraved with the outline of a human foot-mark, palmette or something else. In the course of time the stamp assumed a purely decorative character and was used in combination with other technical methods.

Another widely practised method of decorating pottery was the clay slip (barbotine technique) which made it possible to ornament it with designs that



stood out in relief – with stylized vine-twigs and ivy-leaves and a successful imitation of fir-cone husks. Pottery was also decorated by another method – one or more moulds filled with clay were pressed onto the still damp pot⁶.

A few of the clay moulds had on them one-sided negatives of ornamental designs, taken from metal, marble or ceramic objects decorated in relief. This type of imprint was usually of great artistic value. Most of the moulds, however, were made by the potter himself and attest the high or low level of his skill, often showing a lack of knowledge of the basic measurements for such moulds. He often



made them as he thought fit, without being able to understand the fine points of the ancient art of pottery.

Usually the pattern in relief was made along the upper part of the vessel, in the form of an uninterrupted figural frieze. Most frequently, the pottery that has been found is decorated with Dionysian scenes. The cult of Dionysus, the god of wine and joviality, was very popular in that part of the country where vineyards have been cultivated since antiquity. It was, therefore, not by chance that in Boutovo there was a religious *thiasus* (society which was dedicated to Dionysus and whose 109 members' names are immortalized in the inscription on a stone slab which has been found. Dionysus is depicted as a young man wearing a *nebris* (fawn-skin), standing and holding in his left hand a *thyrsus* (a staff entwined with a ribbon and surmounted with a pine-cone) and in his right hand a two-handled vessel (*cantharus*). He is surrounded by *satyrs*, *panes*, *sileni* and *bacchae*. Most often we come across pots and vases featuring heads of *sileni*, with expressive old men's faces, fleshy bloated noses, downcast eyes and long flowing beards. The ancient masters showed a great deal of imagination in imitating originals from



Greece and Asia Minor. They imitated them but took local types as models for their *sileni* and thus obtained a characteristic and highly popular image of *Silenus*.

Other deities of the Graeco-Roman pantheon, such as Artemis, Hermes and Heracles, were also favourite themes with the ancient potters.

The cult of Artemis, the goddess of the chase and the moon and the patroness of young girls, was very popular in this part of the country. There was a temple to Artemis in the neighbourhood of the Pavlikeni and Boutovo potteries. The ruins of this temple were not discovered until quite recently.

Artemis was depicted on the ceramic vessels as a young girl in a double *chiton*, carrying a drawn bow and a quiver.

It is quite natural to come across the theme of Hermes in finds in a



production and trading centre such as the one we are discussing. As the herald and messenger of the gods and the patron of merchants, he is invariably represented with his *caduceus* and leather wallet. Among the designs on the pottery brought to light there are often very fine artistic representations of Heracles, the symbol of physical strength and beauty. The ancient Greek hero, in a standing posture, is traditionally draped with the Nemean lion's skin and is leaning on his club. Of particular interest is a fragment of a broken ceramic vessel found near Hotnitsa, on which there is a well-preserved medallion worked in relief and featuring Heracles feasting. The large muscular form of his body, the noble contours of his head and his other attributes were all borrowed by the local masters from the Greek original.

Besides making use of mythical subjects in their decorative work, the an-

cient potters often exploited the theme of mortal men acting out their daily lives. The hand of a skilful and mature craftsman is discernible in several drawings of gladiators' duels and medallions featuring realistic erotic scenes.

Hand-moulded patterns in relief, usually of snakes, were used to finish off the friezes on the pottery or to entwine the handles. Vessels with realistically-moulded snakes were dedicated to the goddess Cybele, personifying the great Mother Nature.

At the beginning of the third century ceramic trays were being produced only in Boutovo. One-faced clay moulds were used for the purpose. The moulds were made by the master-potter himself and were copied from models of metal trays decorated in relief. The trays found in Boutovo are rectangular, round or elliptic, with flat horizontal edges and two flat handles. The edges and the handles are decorated with floral patterns in relief (stylized vines, ivy, palmettos and rosettes), figures of animals (dogs, boars, lions, bulls, kids and fawns), fish and grotesque human heads. An attempt at figural compositions in the decoration of the handles is obvious, although it was, in most respects, highly unsuccessful. The embossed effect was achieved by pressing various dies onto the still moist vessel. Some of them were also used to stamp the wheel-made pottery. The dies themselves showed a high level of workmanship and a true sense for depicting wild life. Perhaps they were imported from abroad but nobody can doubt the skill of the self-taught potters who used them. Floral or animal patterns usually occur separately in the work of the ancient potters.

But among the finds from Boutovo we often come across an original, although arbitrary and somewhat naïve, combination of both. Smaller or larger rosettes, stylized twigs and musical instruments (lyres) frame drawings of angry wild beasts. What the potter had in mind was most probably a hunting scene under the open star-lit sky or Orpheus among the wild beasts. A reflection of the growing influence of Christian symbolism at that time are the fish patterns which occur very often on the Boutovo trays. A large number of trays bear the bearded faces of Dionysus' jovial partners – the *sileni*, quite in accord with what we have already said about the decorative tendencies typical of the Boutovo and Pavlikeni pottery centres.

The Hotnitsa, Pavlikeni and Boutovo embossed pottery was in itself the continuation into the Roman period of the Hellenistic tradition of decorating earthenware in relief. It was an imitation of the expensive embossed metal vessels and was intended for ordinary, not so well-to-do customers. During the Hellenistic and Roman periods such vessels were made in almost all the pottery centres. Quantitatively, this type of pottery was only an insignificant part of the total output of a potter's workshop. The method of adding plastic-moulded ornamentation

to wheel-made pottery proved extremely inefficient and was consciously avoided and only rarely used by the ancient Boutovo potters. It was gradually superseded by the much easier method of using clay moulds that formed the whole surface of a piece of pottery, including the decoration.

Towards the end of the second century ceramic lamps began to be produced in Boutovo. In this way an end was put to the import of such lamps from the Eastern Greek and West Roman production centres.

The ceramic lamps were made in clay moulds, each divided into two halves. The production of these lamps did not, however, begin with this. Before this, models of lamps were made of clay, work in which the potters were able to give reign to their creative imagination.

More than 150 moulds and 200 little clay lamps have been discovered in Boutovo. A small number of the Boutovo lamps belong to the type of the so-called 'Greek lamps' of the Roman period. They were widespread along the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean in the period from the second to the fourth century. Most of the lamps found in Boutovo, however, are essentially different from the 'Greek' type, although they derived from it. The local potters took the 'Greek' type in principle, as their model, but introduced new elements to adapt it to the taste of their Thracian customers. Thus standardization was avoided and variety introduced. At first glance the Boutovo lamps are almost all alike, but a closer examination of each one reveals unrepeated features, especially in the ornamentation. The decorative designs vary from meandering and circular lines or stylized vines and ivy leaves to genre and erotic scenes. Lamps with one wick predominate in the Boutovo find. They are round-shaped and the wick-socket is attached to the body of the lamp. There are very few lamps with more than one wick in this find.

During the third century the mass production of terracotta ware began in the Boutovo pottery. The terracotta figurines brought to light in Boutovo are typical examples of folk art and were turned out in great quantities in antiquity to satisfy the demand for them among the masses. The terracotta works, like sculpture, reflected the ideas and outlook of ancient society. The ancient potters embodied their ideal of beauty in the mythological scenes with which they decorated their ware. In the style of the terracotta figurines the influence of monumental art can be felt. The process of making them comprised four stages: modelling, retouching, glazing and firing.

The modelling was done by hand or in moulds, or by a combination of the two technologies. In the first case the potter took a piece of clay and shaped the figurine with his fingers, but most of the terracotta ware was made in moulds and mostly two moulds were used – a reverse and an obverse, but sometimes more than two moulds. This was the most frequently used method, as it made mass

production possible. When these two last methods were combined, the hand-modelled parts were joined to the mould-made body. In the retouching stage the unwanted clay was shaved off and holes were bored in the body of the figurine to let the steam out of the hollow inside. Before being fired the figurines were covered with the same glaze as the potters used for their finer luxury ware.

The terracotta ware was baked in the smaller kilns, along with the luxury pottery.

The ancient Boutovo potters drew the subjects for their terracottas from the famous ancient sculptures which they copied without making changes in them. The most popular was Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty. The figurines of Aphrodite are moulded with exquisitely soft and gracious lines and the expression on the face suggests the goddess's inner life. No less artistic are three other finds that came from Boutovo: the bust of a young girl, a woman with a mural crown, and a pair of lovers.

At Boutovo we come across figurines of sitting women, most probably goddesses. This type of sitting woman in a static posture is found in very early Greek sculpture and became very widespread during the Hellenistic period. It seems that the Boutovo potter did not find the Greek prototype sufficiently impressive for he incised additional circlets on his figurines, thus making them more elaborate.

The greater part of the terracottas found in Boutovo were modelled with considerable naïvety and without any particular knowledge of the proportions of the human body. They have none of the features that are so typical of their Roman counterparts – clear-cut lines and a life-like resemblance to the original. However, they are imbued with the freshness and vividness of folk art. The mould-made busts of armed warriors and the small hand-made figurines found in Boutovo belong to this group of terracotta ware.

The ancient potters did not neglect children. They made small terracotta horses and birds for them. As the finds show, these could be made either in moulds or by hand. The horses' heads were realistically modelled but the bodies were moulded only in general lines. There were riders stuck to the horses and wheels harnessed to them.

We possess a rich collection of earthen votive tablets that were found on the site of the Pavlikeni and Boutovo pottery centres. They were made in the same clay moulds, with a pattern on one side only, which the ancient potters used for embossing other pottery. Zeus, the father of the gods, appears most often on the votive tablets. The Olympian Thunderer is represented in his traditional solemn pose, seated on his throne in front of a small temple. He is dressed in a *himation* which leaves his chest half-bare. He is holding a sceptre in his left hand, which is

raised above his head, and an eagle is perched on his right hand, which is stretched out before him. His face expresses serenity and grandeur. There are votive tablets with Zeus in a different position: upright, half-clothed, holding before him both the sceptre and eagle.

On the sites of these ancient potteries we have also come across votive tablets bearing the likenesses of Dionysus, Hermes, Heracles and Cybele.

In order to satisfy the people's demands for mortuary pottery and for vessels for religious rites, the Hotnitsa, Pavlikeni and Boutovo centres turned out, among other things, censers.⁷ Two kinds have been found: censers for domestic use and mortuary incensories. The former are of a medium size and are in the form of a truncated cone. They have a short ring-shaped stem and there is a cone-shaped protuberance at the bottom of the inside of censer. The outside walls are smooth but the surface of the inside walls is furrowed by deep concentric circles. The vessel is perforated all over with little holes which form rows going radially from the bottom to the thicker rim at the top of the censer. This type of censers are often found in the excavated ruins of ancient buildings, where coins of the second and third centuries also come to light. They used to be filled with embers and pine resin. The deep furrows, the cone-shaped protuberance and the radial rows of holes were particularly conducive to the burning of the resin and to its being completely burnt up.

The mortuary incensories were made on the potter's wheel out of the same well-purified clay as the luxury pottery was made and were just as carefully fired. They look like large wide cups with a cone-shaped or spherical upper half to which the high wheel-made cylindrical stem was joined. They are of interest because of the plastic patterns on them. These decorative designs were drawn on them while they were still on the potter's wheel: deep parallel furrows with sharp edges, often pinched by the fingers at equal intervals, or crossed vertically by short lines made with a cogwheel.

The pottery centres at Hotnitsa, Pavlikeni and Boutovo also turned out coarser ware for everyday use: pots, deep bowls, cone-shaped bowls, wine jars, amphorae, etc. They were made of fine clay mixed with sand and baked at a lower temperature than the finer pottery and because of this the colour of the vessels was not even all over them. The Hotnitsa pottery specialized in the production of this particular type of ware, while at Pavlikeni and Boutovo it was turned out only in limited quantities. It continued to be produced through the whole period of antiquity all over the territories of the present-day Bulgaria and its manufacture was probably a continuation of the ancient Thracian traditions in this craft.

The owners of the potter's workshops were either ordinary craftsmen or



people from among the ruling aristocracy, who hired master-potters and also exploited the labour of slaves and of the local Thracian population.

The owner of the Hotnitsa pottery centre was a petty craftsman, while the Pavlikeni workshops were built on the estate of a big Thracian landowner. One of the owners at Boutovo was Pautal, the son of Cornitus, a Dionysian priest.

The archaeological excavation in Boutovo made it possible not only to study the pottery workshops but also, to a great extent, to ascertain the topography of the ancient settlement. It covered the eastern and central districts of



the present-day village. The Lomiya, a small river flowing from west to east, divides Boutovo into two quarters. To the north of the river there are the ruins of a fortress wall. In excavation work here, a number of architectural finds were unearthed: cornices, capitals, the bases of columns, etc., and the foundations of several buildings. The bronze figurines, votive tablets and coins which were found in Boutovo came from this part of the ancient settlement. It is most likely that this was the residential quarter with the public buildings and fortifications, while to the south of the river, on its right bank, were the potter's workshops.

The ancient centres of pottery production in the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum were plundered in the barbarian incursions.

About the middle of the third century considerable numbers of Goths, led by Kniva, invaded Moesia. At Novae they divided up into two groups: one group of about 70,000 stayed to lay siege to the fortress and the rest made their way over the Balkan Range to Philippopolis, leaving smouldering ruins everywhere behind them. Under the pressure of the Romans, the Goths abandoned the siege of Novae and headed for Nicopolis ad Istrum. There they were routed by the Roman army

under the command of the Emperor Trajan Decius. More than 30,000 of their soldiers perished on the battle-field.

In the winter of 251 Trajan Decius made feverish preparations for the renewal of the struggle with the Goths. His plan was to cut off those who had crossed the Balkan Range and gone to the south when they were returning, encumbered with the booty they had taken from Philippopolis, which they had plundered and destroyed. The struggle was fought out in the battle of Abbritus (near the present-day town of Razgrad) in which both the Emperor Trajan Decius and his son Herenius were killed – something which had never happened before in Roman history.

After this incursion of the Goths, life in the once-flourishing pottery centres declined but never died out completely. The early decades of the fourth century witnessed a partial stabilization of the economic and cultural life there. Only a few decades later, the lands between the River Danube and the Balkan Range were again overrun by Goths. This fresh invasion culminated in the battle of Adrianople in 378 in which the Roman army suffered a severe defeat. This defeat had dire consequences. The Roman Empire was seized by a grave economic crisis and was never able to recover completely from this disastrous situation. The end of its existence was clearly in sight.

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Pottery production in the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum flourished at a time of general economic upsurge throughout the lands lying between the Danube and the Balkan Range. The pottery workshops at Hotnitsa, Pavlikeni and Boutovo were obviously set up and run with the aim of turning out locally made ware which would take the place of imported pottery on the market. Of course the process of developing pottery production was different in the three centres. Thus, for instance, at Hotnitsa the potters first mastered the art of making coarse ware and later proceeded to the production of finer pottery. At the same time the centre near Pavlikeni specialized exclusively in the making of a wide range of fine pottery, although not in sufficient quantities to entirely replace the imported ware on the market. A few decades later the Boutovo pottery centre actually succeeded in doing this.

The question has arisen as to whether the pottery made in the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum was an exact imitation of the pottery imported from Asia Minor. Actually, most of the locally made ware repeated the basic forms of the Eastern Greek pottery. This was due, primarily, to the role played by immigrants from the eastern Roman provinces. Yet, in our find, we come across vessels which are quite the same as those which were being made in the western Roman

provinces at this time and also others which clearly showed the influence of the local Thracian pottery traditions, which did not die out completely during the period of Roman domination. Therefore, in the work found on the site of the former Pavlikeni pottery, we detect the hand of the master potters who emigrated from Asia Minor and settled in these parts, in those from the Hotnitsa centre we can undoubtedly see the work of local potters who managed to master, to some extent, the technology of making red-glazed ware.

The Boutovo centre was the largest of the three, and could boast of having the widest range of production. Profiting from both the Roman and the Thracian traditions in the making of pottery, the ancient Boutovo craftsmen perfected their mastery, developed their own good taste and worked out a type of ware that bears the distinct mark of their individual style.

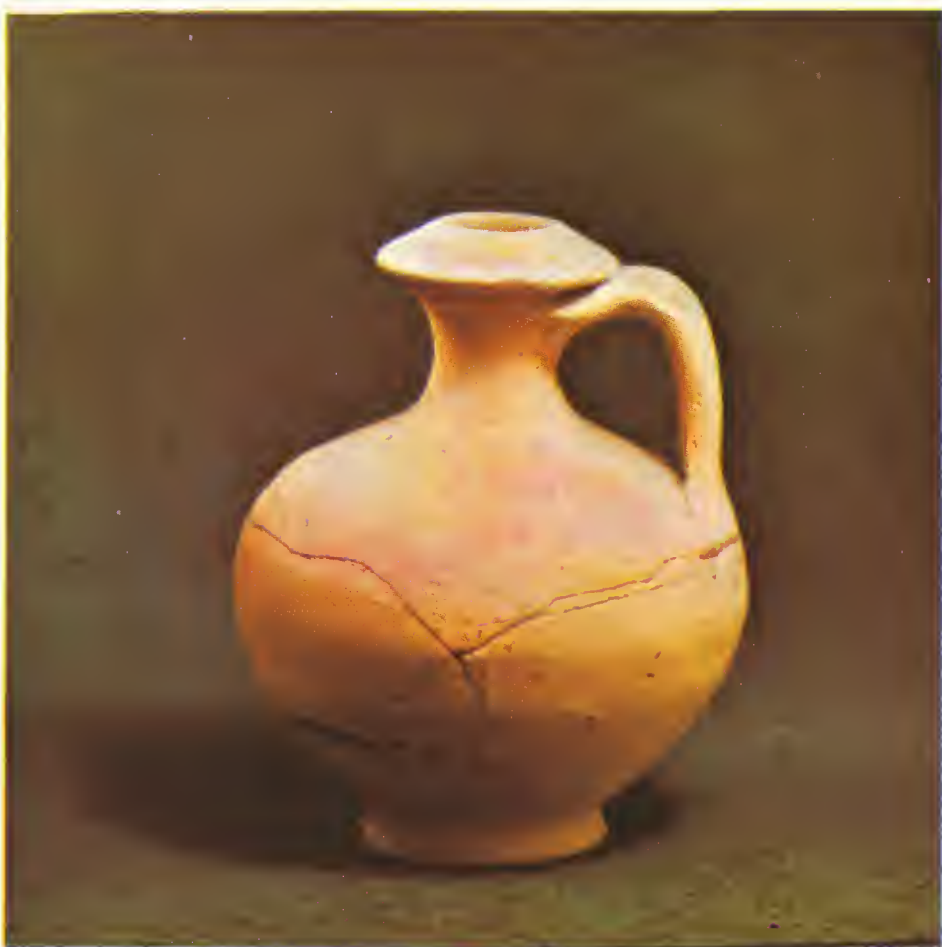
That is why we began this account from the time when the ancient centres of pottery production in these parts had reached their highest peak, that is from the time when the so-called 'ancient Boutovo ceramics' were made.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Ceramic vessel, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.









Ceramic vessel, Hotnitsa, 2nd-3rd cent.



Ceramic vessel, Boutovo, 2nd-3rd cent.
Cup, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.



Amphora, Boutovo, 2nd-3rd cent.





Fragment of a fruit bowl, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.





Small ceramic vessel decorated in relief, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.





Fragment of ceramic vessel decorated in relief, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.





Ceramic vessel with patterns in relief, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Ceramic vessel with patterns in relief, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Clay mould of a Pan, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Clay mould of a kid (?), Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.
Clay cast of a lion, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.





Dionysus. Fragment of an embossed vessel, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.





The old Dionysus. Fragment of a ceramic vessel, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.





Artemis. Mould for decoration in relief, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.





Heracles. Fragment of a ceramic vessel, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.

Heracles. Fragment of a ceramic vessel with a raised ornament, Boutovo, 3rd cent.

Heracles. Fragment of a ceramic vessel with a raised ornament, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.





Gladiators. Fragment of a ceramic vessel decorated in relief, Pavlikeni 2nd-3rd cent.

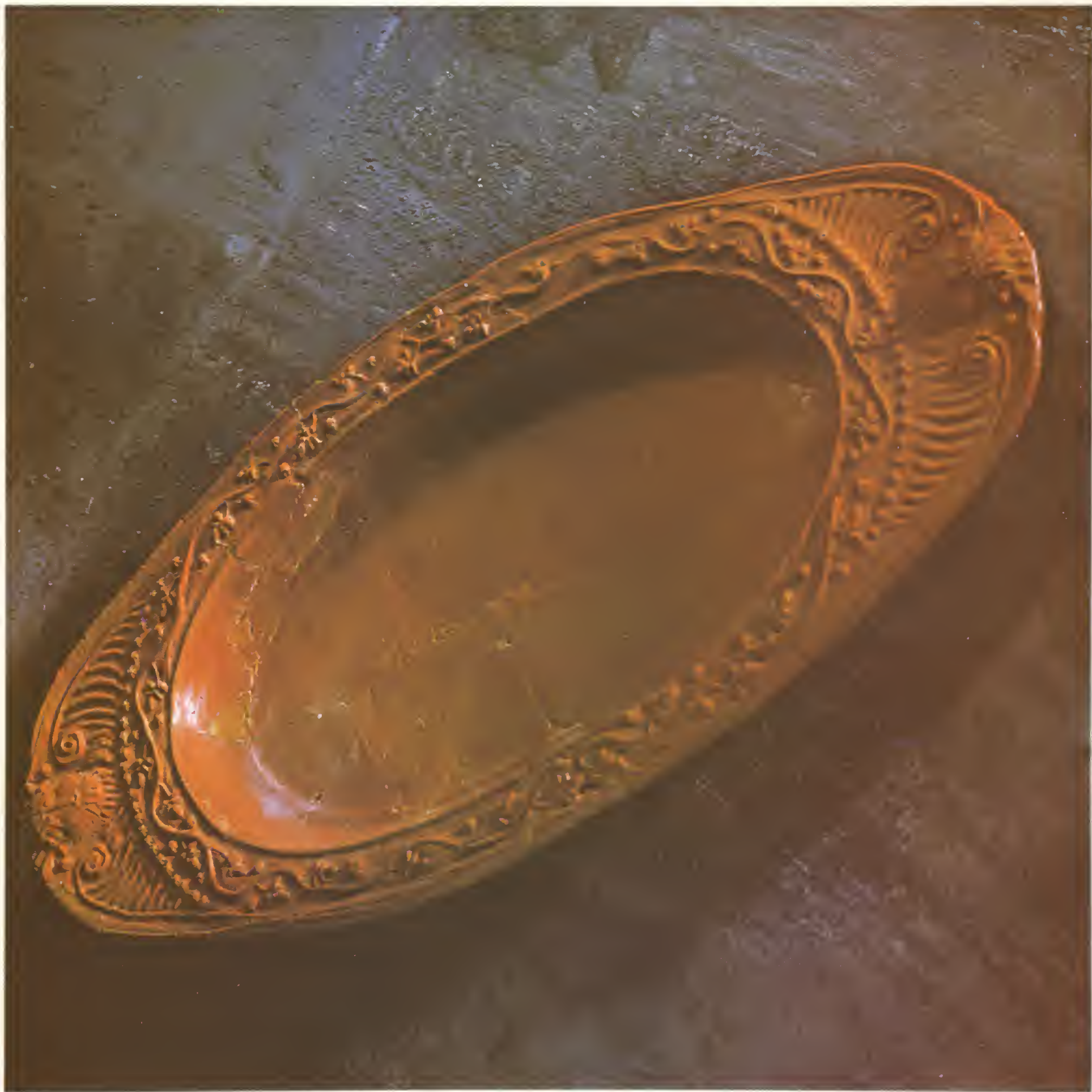




Erotic scene. Fragment of a ceramic vessel, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.



Ceramic vessel decorated with a snake in relief, Hotnitsa, 3rd cent.
 Fragment of a ceramic vessel decorated with a snake in relief, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.
 Handle of a ceramic vessel featuring a snake in relief, Hotnitsa, 3rd cent.



Tray, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Fragment of a tray, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Fragment of a tray, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Handle of a patera, Pavlikeni, 3rd cent.
 Handle of a patera, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.



Figurine, handle of a patera, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.
Figurine, handle of a patera, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.



Imported clay lamps of the 2nd cent., found near Boutovo





Two-wick clay lamp, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.



Fragment of a clay lamp shaped like a human figure, Boutovo, 3rd cent.

Fragment of a clay lamp shaped like an eagle, Pavlikeni, 2nd-3rd cent.

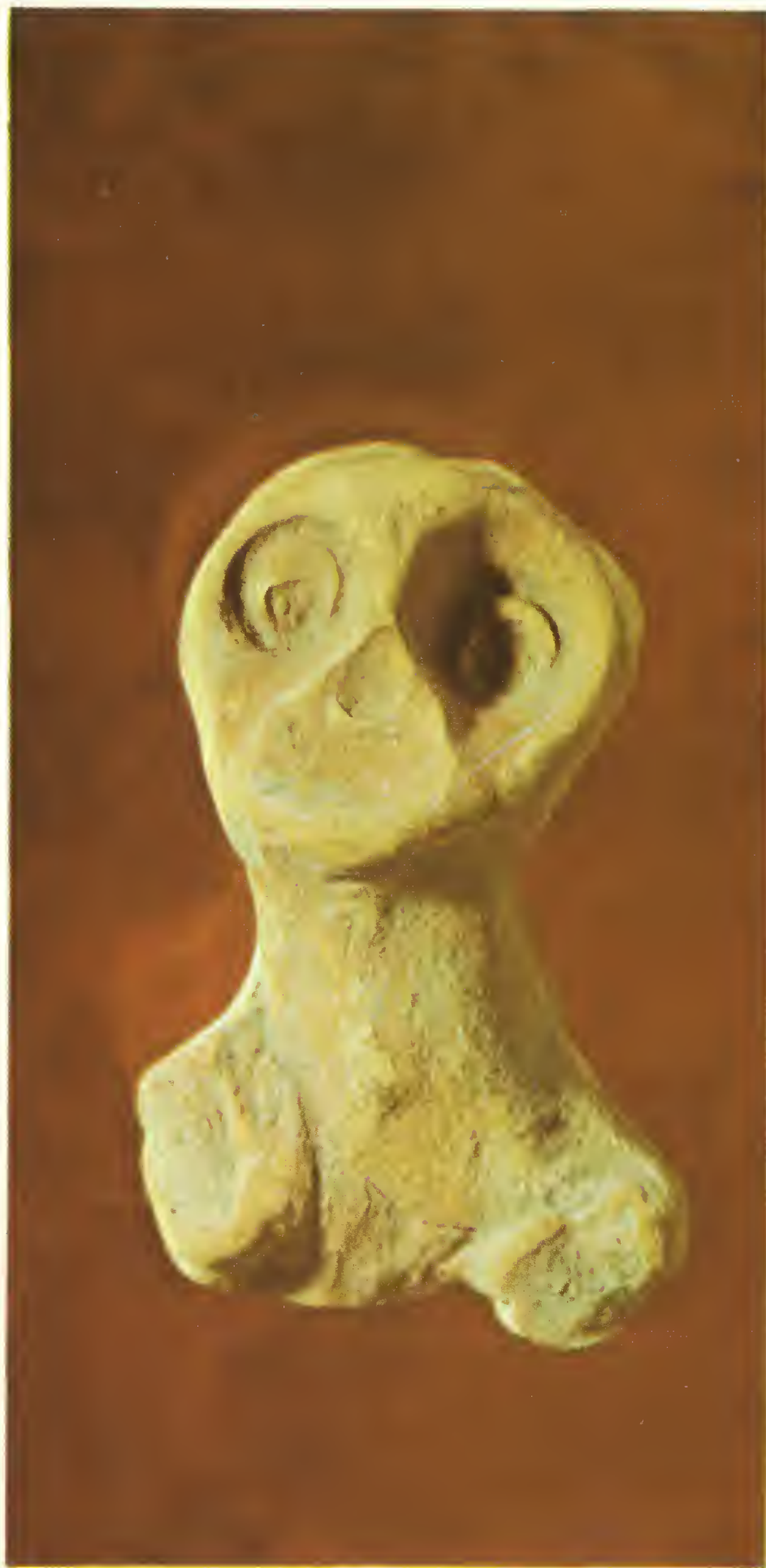
Fragment of a clay lamp, Discodouratera, 2nd-3rd cent.

Five-wick clay lamp, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.



Seven-wick clay lamp, Hotnitsa, 3rd cent.





Human figurine shaped by hand, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.
Human figurine shaped by hand, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Human figurine shaped by hand, Hotnitsa, 3rd cent.

Figurine of a warrior, Pavlikeni, 3rd cent.

Cast of a clay mould for terracottas, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.

Head of the clay figurine of a goddess, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Heads of clay figurines, Pavlikeni, 3rd cent.





Clay head of a female figurine, Boutovo, 4th cent.
 Woman's clay head, Pavlikeni, 3rd cent.
 Clay actor's mask, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.
 Woman's clay head, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Eastern goddess, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Young girl, clay mould for terracottas, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Heads of warriors, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Heads and bust of warriors, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Toy colt, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Cockerel, fragment of a clay mould, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Clay votive tablet of Zeus, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Clay medallions in honour of Dionysus, Pavlikeni, 3rd cent.
Clay phallus, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Clay censer, Boutovo, 2nd-3rd cent.





Clay censer, Boutovo, 2nd-3rd cent.





Pot, Hotnitsa, 2nd-3rd cent.





Wine cup, Boutovo, 3rd-4th cent.





Cult vessel, Boutovo, 2nd-3rd cent.

¹ A whole potter's quarter with kilns, potters' workshops and tools and some finished ware were excavated in 1961 in the centre of the present-day village of Boutovo in Veliko Turnovo district. The results of the archaeological investigations have not been published as they are not yet completed. Publications have been confined so far to brief scientific announcements, papers and popular science articles.

See:

Bogdan Soutov, A Crafts Centre in Moesia Inferior, *Arheologia* magazine, IV, 1962, No. 4, pp. 30-34;

Б. Султов, Один Ремесленный центр в Нижней Мёзии;

Actes du Premier Congres International des Etudes Balcaniques et Sud-Est Européennes, C., 1970, p. 479-488;

Jan Filip, Manuel encyclopedie de préhistoire européenne. Prague, 1966, I, p. 189, tabl. IV;

B. Sultov, Un antico centro per la produzione di ceramiche artistiche. *Arte figurativa*, 1963, 46-47;

B. Soutov, The Old Master-potters of Boutovo, *Bulgaria Today* magazine, 1967, No. 4, pp. 26-28.

² We owe the discovery of the pottery centre near Pavlikeni to the cooperative farm tractor drivers who in the winter of 1970-1971 unearthed, while ploughing a field, the remains of an ancient kiln. The museum authorities in Veliko Turnovo were immediately ap-

praised of this. Archaeological investigations were forthwith put in hand. These are not yet completed and, for this reason, their results have not been published.

³The pottery centre near Hotnitsa was discovered in 1965. A great deal of credit for the excavations carried out there goes to Ivan Kokorkov, voluntary collaborator of the museum. About the results of the excavations near Hotnitsa, see:

Bogdan Soutov, A Pottery Centre of the Roman and Old Bulgarian Period, Recently Uncovered near Hotnitsa, *Arheologia* magazine, XI, 1969, pp. 12-24.

⁴ For a summary of the results of the excavations carried out in Boutovo and near Pavlikeni and Hotnitsa, see:

B. Soutov, Ancient Pottery-making in Moesia Inferior. Papers of the Congress of Thracology, 1972 (to be published)

⁵ Part of the Boutovo pottery was destined for religious rites. See: Bogdan Soutov, Ancient Burial Finds from Veliko Turnovo District. Vol. IV, 1968, p. 41

⁶ Bogdan Soutov, Decorated-in-Relief Pottery, Bulletin of the District Historical Museum in Veliko Turnovo. Vol. V, 1972, pp. 21-29.

⁷ Bogdan Soutov, Clay Censors from Boutovo and Hotnitsa. Bulletin of the Archaeological Institute, Vol. 33, 1972, pp. 176-182.

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